

Cut and Post: online delivery of non-distance design education

The University of Arizona's online course management system was created by the Canadian firm Desire 2 Learn (<http://www.desire2learn.com>) for research and the development of distance learning courses. An Arizona initiative for the state's schools to better provide all residents access to higher education was the impetus for the U of A purchasing the software 5 years ago, making it the first University in the United States to use the program with RIT and University of Michigan following shortly. It is becoming a vital teaching tool for the Visual Communication Design program at the U of A School of Art.

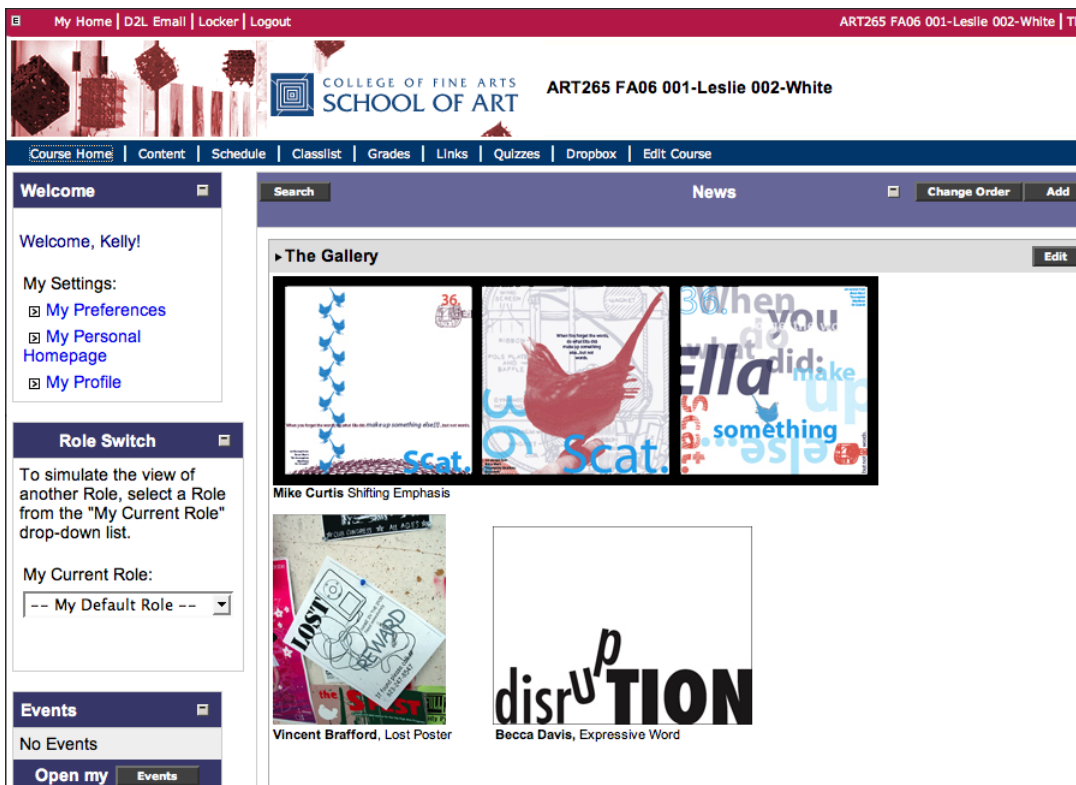
The screenshot displays a web-based course management interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for 'My Home', 'D2L Email', 'Chat', 'Locker', 'Logout', and the course identifier 'ART461_561 SP07 001 Leslie', along with the date 'Friday March 30, 2007'. Below this is a banner for the 'COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS SCHOOL OF ART' with the course ID 'ART461_561 SP07 001 Leslie'. A secondary navigation bar contains links for 'Course Home', 'Content', 'Classlist', 'Discussions', 'Grades', 'Quizzes', 'Edit Course', 'Links', 'Glossary', and 'Articles', with a 'Dropbox' icon on the right. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column, titled 'Modules', lists links for 'Syllabus', 'Projects', 'Lingo', 'Sound', and 'Project Four: Sound and Vision'. The middle column, titled 'Course Content', provides a hierarchical view of the course materials, including 'Syllabus' (with 'Syllabus PDF'), 'Projects' (with 'Project 1: Cliché PDF', 'Project 2: Interaction', 'Project 3: Film Titles', and 'Project 4: Sound and Vision'), 'Lingo' (with 'Lingo handout 1'), 'Sound' (with 'Using Sound'), and 'Project Four: Sound and Vision'. The right column contains utility links: 'search content', 'compile for printing', and an 'Administration' section with links for 'Content Display Settings', 'Manage Files', 'Manage Content', 'Add Module', 'Add Topic', and 'Import Course'. A 'Done' button is located at the bottom left of the page.

The content page of a course site

An Extended Classroom

Like any course Web site, this online hub becomes a great resource for the class, housing much of the content and valuable research links. But its discussion boards, paging system, drop boxes and lockers make it another meeting space in and of itself. This hub extends the classroom making it one where students themselves participate in the development of course content. Students upload samples and Web links to design projects, process and other articles of research. They participate in online discussions of in-progress work. Students post work to their lockers and make that work public for feedback as well as upload to designated drop boxes that are automatically linked to the grade management tool.

While lockers and drop boxes provide opportunities for students to see others works, the home page can act as a rotating gallery that visually reminds students of the scope and breadth of a particular class or project. Students show pride in having their images chosen for the week.



Course Home with rotating weekly images.

Accountability

D2L offers flexibility in meeting deadlines while simultaneously making students more accountable for their participation and engagement.

Drop boxes are created for each of the final critiques, making it possible for students to upload their work – even from home. If they cannot make a critique they are still responsible for meeting deadlines. Drop boxes can also be set to open and close at certain times, so that late submissions are not possible without the instructor's approval/awareness.

Postings of grades and meeting times are not permitted at the U of A. But with password protection no one can access the site except for students enrolled in the class, TAs and instructors. This allows for individual meeting times and grades to be permanently posted all semester ensuring students always knows when they are required to meet, what they are to bring, and how they are progressing.

It also lets the students see their calculated grades to date while clearly indicating missing work and lack of participation in discussions etc. This transparency can have its drawbacks. Students are able to see when they are perhaps one point shy of a higher letter grade and tend to scrutinize percentage weights more than a typical syllabus.

Admin		Dropbox Folders		
Folder	Total Files	Unchecked Files	Flagged Files	
Project One	77	24	0	
Project #3 Site maps	47	45	0	
Animations Due Sept. 26th	33	4	0	
Theatre Arts Site Maps	26	5	0	

Total Grade Items	Number of Graded Items	Final Grade
9	8	91.25%

Category/Item	Weighted Grade	Comments	Last Updated
Project One: Just the Type	10/10		Oct 14, 2006 4:26 PM
E-Portfolio	10/10		Oct 14, 2006 4:26 PM
Collections Website	18/20		Oct 14, 2006 4:26 PM
animation upload	2/2		Oct 14, 2006 4:26 PM

No files have been submitted by the following:

- [Claudia Rennee Alvarez](#)
- [Jessica Leann Lansdon](#)

[Email unsubmitted students](#)

Delete
 Mark Read
 Flag
 Download
 Show Everyone

[Back](#)

Dropbox list, grade window, list of students who did not participate with the option of emailing them from the same window

A Critique Venue and Course Assessment Tool

Most of the design classes are traditional classes meeting 2 times a week for 3 hour studios. Discussions and critiques take place in class, and all students know each other as they travel in groups by the year they were accepted into the viscom program. In addition to these critiques, students address a particular project in depth and post this critique to the discussion board. This extra time outside of class allows participation from those students who may need more time to develop their thoughts or who have a hard time being heard over more vocal classmates. This provides the possibility of creating a tighter community when back in the classroom. It can however also strengthen cliques. I have seen undo praise for mediocre work.

I have been experimenting with the anonymous critique, seeing if a different level of honesty, will manifest itself. The jury is still out on this, but the anonymous discussion board does seem to be a favorite space for students to critique the class and my teaching. I appreciate getting this feedback and not just at the end of the semester. It allows me to make modifications during a class instead of having to wait till I teach the same course again.

The screenshot shows a course discussion board interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'My Home', 'D2L Email', 'Logout', and 'Locker'. The course title 'ART361 FA06 001 Leslie' and the date 'Friday March 30, 2006' are displayed. Below this is a banner for the 'COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS SCHOOL OF ART'. The main content area contains a critique post by Kelly Leslie, dated Nov 8, 2006. The critique lists four points of feedback on student projects, discusses the importance of sensitivity and research, and provides suggestions for improvement. The post concludes with an invitation for students to post comments and a signature 'Kelly'.

The screenshot shows an email thread. The first email is from Kelly Leslie, dated Nov 8, 2006, with the subject 'Re: in regards to caring'. The second email is from an anonymous user, dated Nov 7, 2006, with the subject '<No Topic>'. The email content reads: 'I think the outcome of the students' projects was a direct result of how the project wasn't exactly presented to us in the best fashion. From the professor, but moreso the client. There are two sides to what happened here, and it wasn't only the class' fault. Our projects probably reflected exactly how much we knew and/or cared about this project.'

An anonymous response to the above critique

A Collaborative Tool

We traditionally offer 2 concurrent sections of our beginning design studio. D2L offers the opportunity for students to see additional approaches to projects from other sections. Students are able to join in discussions and critiques with others taking the same class and Instructors are able to easily share materials, examples, workload and feedback making the projects ultimately richer and more accessible to a larger percentage of students.

The screenshot displays a D2L course interface for 'ART 265 DESIGN STUDIO 1'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'My Home', 'D2L Email', 'Locker', and 'Logout'. Below this is a header section with the 'COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS SCHOOL OF ART' logo and the course ID 'ART265 FA06 001-Leslie 002-White'. A secondary navigation bar includes 'Course Home', 'Content', 'Schedule', 'Classlist', 'Grades', 'Links', 'Quizzes', 'Dropbox', and 'Edit Course'. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column, titled 'ART 265', contains a 'Course Materials' menu with links for 'Project One', 'Sake Exercise', 'Project 2 : Word', 'Project 3: Shifting Emphasis', 'Designer Presentations lost', 'Final Logo Project', and 'Resources'. The middle column, titled 'ART 265 DESIGN STUDIO 1', lists the course materials: 'Course Materials' (Syllabus, Disabilities Resource Center, Student Conduct + Academic Integrity, Live Trace Demo), 'Project One' (Project #1: Phase One, Project #1: Phase Two, Project #1: Phase 3 with samples, Form Reduction Variations, Scanning Tips, The Graphic Signal, Design Terms, PDF Download of Accordion Book Binding), 'Sake Exercise' (Sake Project, Template for Collage), and 'Project 2 : Word' (Word Project). The right column contains administrative tools: 'search content', 'compile for printing', 'Administration' (Content Display Settings, Manage Files, Manage Content, Add Module, Add Topic, Import Course). The bottom of the page shows a 'Done' status bar.

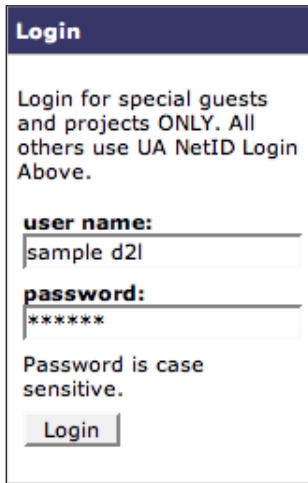
Project One shows the contributions of two instructors to the same project

A Tour

You may log onto the d2l system as a guest at <<http://d2l.arizona.edu/>>. There are 2 sample non-design course sites.

user name: sample.d2l

password: tryout



The image shows a login form with a dark blue header containing the word "Login" in white. Below the header, the text reads: "Login for special guests and projects ONLY. All others use UA NetID Login Above." There are two input fields: the first is labeled "user name:" and contains the text "sample d2l"; the second is labeled "password:" and contains six asterisks "*****". Below the password field, it says "Password is case sensitive." At the bottom of the form is a button labeled "Login".